

## Press release: Extended jail sentence handed to waste criminal

John Bruce (aged 46) is already serving 26 months imprisonment for dumping, burying and burning hazardous waste at Ridgeway Park Farm, Throckmorton Airfield, Worcestershire.

On Tuesday 4 September, Bruce pleaded guilty to a charge in relation to operating a regulated facility at Ridgeway Park Farm without an Environmental Permit. Worcester Crown Court handed Bruce a 22 week custodial sentence to run concurrently to his existing 26 month sentence.

The case, brought by the Environment Agency, concerned illegal waste operations at Ridgeway Park Farm in 2016. Bruce had accepted over 60 tonnes of redundant kitchen and bathroom materials onto his site. When Environment Agency officers visited the farm, they saw that in addition to these materials, flat pack furniture and packaging materials were being burnt on site.

In mitigation, the Judge noted that Bruce had pleaded guilty and therefore avoided the need for a full trial.

An Environment Agency officer in charge of the investigation said:

Mr Bruce has shown a blatant disregard for the environment and local community by operating a large scale illegal waste site at his farm. His actions undermine legitimate business also the investment and economic growth that go with it.

The Environment Agency will use all its enforcement powers, where we believe environmental offences have been committed. In cases where we believe monies have been unlawfully gained, we will investigate under the proceeds of crime act and confiscate assets.

The Environment Agency urge people to report waste crime on our Incident Hotline 0800 80 70 60 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

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## Speech: UK support for Pacific Islands on climate change

Remarks as delivered today (4 September) by the Rt Hon Mark Field MP, Minister for Asia and the Pacific, at the Pacific Island Forum Leaders'

Dialogue Session with Dialogue Partners, hosted and chaired by H.E. Hon Baron Divavesi Waqa, President of Nauru.

## **Introduction**

Climate change affects us all, but few are threatened as tangibly and gravely as the people of the Pacific. Mr President, you captured the attention of the Commonwealth Summit with your powerful portrayal of the many challenges that Nauru faces from the rising sea; from ocean acidification to the costs of relocating infrastructure.

As my Prime Minister, Theresa May, has said, there is a clear moral imperative for developed economies to help those who stand to lose the most as a result of climate change.

We must work together to find durable solutions. And that is what we are doing.

In December I spoke at the United Nations Security Council in New York making the case – now receiving extensive support internationally – that climate change is a risk to global security.

The 2019 UN Secretary General's Climate Summit will focus global attention on the threats posed by our changing climate, and how we overcome them. As a permanent member of the Security Council, we wholeheartedly support this agenda.

Before that, the Wilton Park Forum in the UK in December, entitled "Navigating Pacific Futures", will raise global awareness of the impact of climate change in the Pacific. This conference – which we will co-host with our New Zealand friends – will be a valuable opportunity for the voices of the Pacific to be heard. I would hope that as many of you as possible will be able to attend.

## **UK climate support**

The United Kingdom is among the largest contributors of international climate finance, especially through multilateral channels such as the World Bank and Green Climate Fund.

We are giving developing countries over £5.5 billion between 2016 and 2020 to help them mitigate and adapt to the impact of climate change.

We work directly with many Pacific states, for example giving £1.2m to the Nationally Determined Contributions Hub in Suva to help you implement your Paris commitments.

We are a long-time supporter of the South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme, and Mr President, we are also backing your new Group of Friends on Climate Security.

We are also pushing for a transformation in how climate change risk and adaptation is addressed globally. We will use our role leading on Climate

Resilience at the 2019 UN Climate Summit to advance this. Meanwhile we shall continue to promote two Commonwealth initiatives – the Marine Economic Programme and the Clean Oceans Alliance.

## Conclusion

Mr President. One does not have to travel to a small island state to understand your vulnerability to rising sea levels, but being here really brings home what it means in practice.

Climate security will be an increasingly important part of our work together, as the UK doubles its diplomatic presence in the region by opening High Commissions in Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu.

I want you, and the people of the Pacific to know that – in the United Kingdom – you have a partner committed to building resilience to climate change, committed to addressing climate-related security risks, and committed to helping the countries of the Pacific adapt to the climate challenges ahead.

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## [Press release: Funding allocated for councils to help rough sleepers](#)

Rough sleepers will receive further support after the government set out plans to fund 83 areas with the highest numbers of people at risk over the next 2 years.

Following on from the launch of its [Rough Sleeping Strategy](#) last month, the government has today (5 September 2018) announced provisional allocations of a £34 million fund to provide local support for those living on the streets.

Councils across England with the highest numbers of rough sleepers will receive a share of the funding to back on-going initiatives in their area, such as dedicated support teams and securing additional bed spaces.

It will be allocated for council spending over the next 2 years and is an extension of the £30 million that we provided to councils in June through our [Rough Sleeping Initiative Fund](#).

Among the projects benefitting from the initial £30 million are:

- Sheffield – allocated £363,000 to expand ‘housing led’ services and increased emergency accommodation provision. The fund also provided a specialist support worker to assist a 64-year-old with mobility and addiction problems from sleeping rough to settle into permanent

accommodation.

- Thanet – allocated £367,000 to fund a rough sleeping coordinator, mental health specialist outreach worker and substance misuse worker. The council now undertakes regular multi-agency case management meeting reviews of rough sleepers with complex needs and provides individual care plans.
- Bournemouth – allocated £387,000 to employ a dedicated rough sleeping coordinator, 4 specialised outreach workers focused on engagement with those on the streets, specialised psychological support to enable work with those who have experienced complex trauma and an initiative to help increase access to private rented sector for those seeking accommodation.

Communities Secretary, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

Our Rough Sleeping Strategy set out the blueprint to end rough sleeping by 2027. Now, we are vigorously taking the steps to make that happen.

The funding through our Rough Sleeping Initiative is already making a real difference in helping support those off the streets into services and accommodation this year.

But there is still work to do and that's why we are supporting these areas with further funding to ensure progress continues to be made and vulnerable people are supported into services and accommodation.

The government's expert Rough Sleeping Initiative Team has closely monitored the progress of the schemes developed from the first £30 million.

Alongside the £34 million allocated today, the government has set aside a further £11 million for spending on additional areas and projects to those supported by the Rough Sleeping Initiative and will announce further details in due course.

As outlined in our [Rough Sleeping Strategy](#) government will provide £45 million into the Rough Sleeping Initiative Fund.

The provisional £34 million allocated towards the 83 authorities today will be for spending in the 2019 to 2020 year. Finalised allocations will be dependent on progress in delivering programmes and services. These will be announced in due course.

[Provisional allocations](#) (PDF, 35.3KB, 4 pages)

If an authority has not fully spent their 2018 to 2019 allocation, we will

subtract the unspent amount from the 2019 to 2020 allocation.

In addition to funding from the Rough Sleeping Initiative in 2019 to 2020, elements of local authorities' original proposals, including those from London authorities, may be taken forward as part of the work resulting from the Rough Sleeping Strategy.

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## **Press release: Government announces further protections for tenants against unfair letting fees**

The move, announced today (5 September 2018) as part of the [Tenant Fees Bill](#), is a further measure to bring an end to costly fees imposed by a landlord or agent.

Under the new default fee provision, a landlord or agent will only be able to recover reasonable incurred costs, and must provide evidence of these costs to the tenant before they can impose any charges.

This will put a stop, for example, to tenants being charged hundreds of pounds for a damaged item that actually only costs a few pounds to replace – such as £60 to replace smoke alarms which the local council would have replaced for free.

Other amendments to the Bill brought forward by the government include taking steps to ensure tenants get their money back quickly by reducing the timeframe that landlords and agents must pay back any fees that they have unlawfully charged.

The Bill is expected to save tenants around £240 million a year, with the Bill also giving them assurance that the deposit they pay at the start of the tenancy cannot exceed 6 weeks' rent.

Minister Rishi Sunak MP said:

Tenants across the country, whatever their income, should not be hit with unfair costs by agents or landlords.

This government is determined to make sure our housing market works and this new provision in the Tenant Fees Bill will make renting fairer and more transparent for all.

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## [Press release: Waste operator fined for illegal waste disposal in Devon countryside](#)

The case was brought by the Environment Agency.

In 2016 Mr Baker imported 7,514 tonnes of inert waste on a field at Poltimore, Exeter under the guise of 'drainage' works. This amount of waste far exceeded that permitted under an authorisation, issued by the Environment Agency, known as a U1 waste exemption. A U1 exemption enables waste to be reused without the need for an environmental permit but sets a maximum tonnage limit of 1,000 tonnes for soil and sub-soil.

The waste, from development sites around Exeter, was used to level off a significant part of the site, altering the character of the field and that of the surrounding landscape. The defendant not only failed to comply with the conditions of his U1 waste exemption but he also failed to secure planning permission from Devon County Council.

Richard Tugwell for the Environment Agency said:

This was a serious abuse of a U1 waste exemption which had a significant impact on the Devon landscape. People who use waste exemptions must ensure they comply with them and obtain appropriate planning permission.

Appearing before Exeter magistrates, Roger Baker, of Bovey Tracey, Devon, was fined £1,710 and ordered to pay £4,946 costs after pleading guilty to an offence under Reg 38 of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016. The court also ordered Mr Baker to remove and appropriately dispose of the waste he'd illegally imported within 12 months.

The case was heard on 23 August 2018.